

Self-Help Virginia

Preliminary Community Assessment

Answering the following questions will help you define local resources within your community critical to a successful Self-Help Virginia (SHV) project. Your answers will also help the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) staff begin to determine if your community has the **readiness** and **capacity** necessary to make the Self-Help approach work.

Please do your best to provide answers for each question even if it is your best educated guess right now. You may find it helpful to have a community meeting to help gather some of the information you need. Please feel free to write your answers on this form or to attach additional sheets if necessary.

Please mail the completed form to: *Jimmy Wallace, DHCD, P.O. Box 570, Abingdon, VA 24212* or fax to (276) 676-5469. You may also call DHCD at (276) 676-5471 if you have questions or need additional information.

Completed by: _____ Date: _____ Phone: _____

1. Tell Us Briefly About Your Community And Project.

Community Name: _____ County: _____

Approximate Community Population: _____

Approximate Number of Households and Nonresidential Users that could be served:

Households _____ Nonresidential Buildings _____

Very briefly describe the water or wastewater issue that need to be addressed:

2. Your Community's Readiness To Begin Self-Help

Community readiness means widespread agreement among residents that the problem exists and they have a willingness to solve it now through Self-Help.

How many residents within the community agree that the problem is critical and they share ownership in solving it?

Few _____ Some _____ Many _____

Will residents organize as a group or use an existing group to manage their Self-Help project?

Yes _____ No _____

If an existing group will be used, who is that group and who is the principal contact?

Group _____ Contact _____

Phone _____

3. More Readiness Information

Do local elected officials support this project? Yes _____ Uncertain _____ No _____

If yes, who is the local official(s)? _____ Phone _____

Are other local groups willing to help your community in this work? If so, who are they?

Has your community ever used a self-help approach to get something done in the past? If so, please provide a brief description of the project(s).

Are there presently any other competing priorities or conflicts within your community? If so, please describe briefly.

Has there ever been a professional engineering assessment of you community's problem? If so, when was this assessment done?

4. Your Community's Capacity To Do Self-Help

Community capacity for Self-Help is local people-power. This essential resource must include at least one local individual who will take personal responsibility to get your project done. We refer to such people as “sparkplugs” because they have the ability to get other residents going and to keep them involved. Sparkplugs have energy and enthusiasm, a clear focus on what must be done and a can-do attitude that will help your community overcome any obstacles that might come up.

Please list up to three residents and/or elected officials that you believe would be good sparkplugs and why you think so. Provide some brief background information about each one and include their phone number so we can contact them.

Name _____ **Phone:** _____

Background and reasons why they would be a good sparkplug:

Name _____ **Phone:** _____

Background and reasons why they would be a good sparkplug:

Name _____ **Phone:** _____

Background and reasons why they would be a good sparkplug:

People-power is also defined as volunteers with applicable skills. You can start by asking neighbors: What's your work experience; what's your profession; what could you do to help out on this project?" These types of questions are likely to uncover a surprising amount of talent and skill in your community such as equipment operators, laborers, organizers, engineers or surveyors, foremen, and construction inspectors. You may also find sources for equipment and materials at donated or reduced costs. As important is the financial means each resident or household is willing to invest to help support the project.

Please indicate the number of residents you believe are willing to work on this project and the types of skills available. Also, please indicate the threshold amount each household can afford and will agree to pay to build your community's water or wastewater service.

Number of residents with skills willing to volunteer some work now is _____

Types of skills we have available:

Equipment or materials we can get or use:

**Amount each household now pays per month for service (if applicable, if not write "NA")
\$ _____**

Most residents agree each household could afford to pay of total of \$ _____ each month for service.

5. Other Comments

Please indicate any other information about the community or the proposed project that you think might be helpful in determining its appropriateness as a Self-Help Virginia project.